NGH...
CHAPTER 3: THE FOX-EARED SKINNER
Are you awake?
GOOD MORNING~
MORNING...
Smack

OH? THERE ARE EVEN MORE THAN BEFORE.
FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, WE'VE GOT GARLIC, GARLIC CHIVES, AND YAMS.
WHY THESE THREE AGAIN?
...
MY BODY CAN'T KEEP UP WITH YOURS, THAT'S WHY!
YOUR GOOD MORNING AND GOOD NIGHT KISSES ARE CUTE, BUT YOU'RE A DAMN SUCCUBUS WITH EVERY-THING ELSE!
THOUGH I DOUBT EATING THESE WILL GIVE ME ANYTHING MORE THAN SOME PEACE OF MIND.

fwsh
fwsh
WHO ARE YOU?
OH, ME?
Sigh

MY NAME'S ARISA, AND I'M A FOX!
JUST OUT HERE DOIN' A LITTLE ADVEN-TURIN'!
OKAY, WHAT DO YOU WANT?
OH, C'MON...
POINT
IT AIN'T EVERY DAY YA SEE A HUMAN OUT FARMIN' IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOREST OF NO RETURN, THE BORDER BETWEEN THE REALMS OF MAN AND MAGIC.
WHOA, A MAGIC REALM? I GUESS EVERY GOOD FANTASY SETTING NEEDS ONE OF THOSE.

YA DON'T SEEM TO BE USIN' ANY SCENT POUCHES OR A SPIRIT BARRIER.
SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF
Stop sniffing...
SCENT POUCHES? SPIRIT BARRIER?
SPFF
SCENT POUCHES ARE FILLED WITH SMELLS THEM MONSTERS DON'T LIKE.
SPIRIT BARRIERS PUT UP WALLS THEM MONSTERS DON'T LIKE TOUCHIN'.
HUH...
KINDA LIKE ANTI-MOSQUITO COILS?
I'VE GOT PLENTY OF OTHER MONSTER-REPELLIN' PRODUCTS, TOO, BUT...
HOW ON EARTH ARE YA SURVIVIN' OUT HERE, MISTER?
UMM...
WELL, IT'S A LONG STORY...
I MEAN, THIS PLACE IS S'POSED TO BE RIDDLED WITH STRONG MONSTERS...
IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T COME ACROSS THEM...

BUT THEY ALL JUST GO KABOOM WITH A SWING OF THE HOE.
KABOOOM
I'M SURE SHE'D LOSE ANY TRUST SHE HAD IN ME IF I JUST TOLD HER THAT, THOUGH.
SO, WHO EXACTLY ARE YOU?
OH, I'M A SKINNER.
A SKINNER?
Y'KNOW HOW THERE'S A CRAZY DANGEROUS DUNGEON ROUND THESE PARTS?
YEAH...
(Not really)
WELL, THERE'S A BUNCHA CORPSES BELONGIN' TO HIGH-RANKIN' ADVENTURERS IN THE AREA...
SO WE GO, TAKE THEIR ARMOR, AND BRING IT BACK TO THE GUILD.

THE MONEY WE GET MOSTLY GOES TO THEIR FAMILIES AS A FORM OF INHERI-TANCE...
AND WE KEEP A TENTH OF IT AS OUR FEE.
I SEE, HENCE THE NAME.
I FEEL LIKE TEN PERCENT IS PRETTY GENEROUS OF YOU, CONSIDERING THE RISK.
WELL, YEAH, THE ACTUAL INSIDE OF THE DUNGEON IS FAR TOO DANGEROUS TO GO ALONE.
WAIT, THAT MEANS...
SLAM
THERE'S A TOWN CLOSE ENOUGH TO HERE FOR YOU TO DO A ROUND TRIP!
A TOWN? YEAH, THERE IS.
YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT AROUND 40 KILOMETERS TO THE SOUTHEAST, THOUGH.

AHH, A TOWN! FINALLY, HUMAN CIVILIZA-TION!
SORRY TO IN-TERRUPT YOUR LITTLE MOMENT, BUT...
THE POLITICAL SITUATION THERE AIN'T THE BEST RIGHT NOW.
IT AIN'T EXACTLY SAFE, SO YOU PROBABLY OUGHTA RECON-SIDER...
YOU'RE KIDDING...
I GUESS I'LL PUT THAT ON HOLD FOR NOW.
JUST KNOWING IT'S THERE AT ALL IS A BIG WIN.
STILL, THIS IS SOME AMAZIN' HERBAL TEA!
I KNOW, RIGHT? MY ROOMMATES TOLD ME ABOUT THE HERBS.
OH... ROOMMATES, HUH?
FLASH

OH! ARE YOU DRINKING HERBAL TEA?!
ROCK
ROCK
PA...
P-P-PALM...
Rattle
Rattle
Rattle
Rattle
A P-PALMTOP...
PALMTOP RAB...!
Rattle
Rattle
Rattle

WHAT'S WRONG, ARISA?
W-WATCH OUT...
T-THEY'RE THE MOST TERRIFYIN' FIGHTERS AROUND... TAKIN' DOWN EVEN A-RANK DEVIL BOARS!
LONG AGO, THE KING OF THIS AREA WAS OUT HUNTIN' AND ACCIDENTALLY SQUASHED A PALMTOP RABBIT'S CARROT...
IN RESPONSE, JUST 200 OF 'EM PAINTED THE WHOLE KINGDOM RED IN AN ALL OUT WAR!
THE DESTRUC-TION EVEN SPREAD TO THE SUR-ROUNDIN' COUNTRIES, IT WAS A TOTAL DISASTER!
SOME GREAT POWERS TRIED TO MEDIATE, WITH OFFERS OF CARROTS...
BUT THEY WERE SHOT DOWN IMMEDIATELY, TOLD THAT "ALL CARROTS OUTSIDE THE FOREST OF NO RETURN ARE YUCKY".
Mm! ♪
Y-YOU DON'T SAY...

I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE THAT FUSSY ABOUT THEM...
H-H-HOW DID YOU...
TAME THAT KINDA BEAST?
HMM, WHAT'S IT CALLED AGAIN? ARTIFICIAL FEEDING?
I JUST GAVE THEM A FEW CARROTS AND THEY STARTED GETTING ATTACHED...
YOU'RE KIDDIN'... YOU MANAGED TO GROW CARROTS THAT WERE UP TO THEIR STANDARDS?
THEY TOOK A BITE AND SAID "I'VE NEVER HAD ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE!" OR SOMETHING.
THEN, THEY BROUGHT ME A BOAR AS A THANK-YOU.
THAT'S NOT JUST ANY CARROT YOU'VE GOT THERE, MISTER!
QUIT IT WITH THE SUGGESTIVE PHRASING.
WAIT, A BOAR?

THAT'D BE A DEVIL BOAR!
DO YA STILL HAVE THE TEETH AND HIDE AROUND?!
YEAH, I KEPT THEM JUST IN CASE.
I THOUGHT I COULD MAKE CLOTHES OUT OF THE HIDE.
THE TEETH AND BONES WILL ROBABLY ST GO IN E TRASH, HOUGH…
YOU MUSTN'T!
YOU ABSO-LUTELY!
MUSTN'T THROW THEM AWAY!
I KNOW THAT LOOK.
WHERE ?!
WHERE ARE YA, A-RANK?!
SHOW YOUR-SELF!
Swsh
Swsh
Swsh
…

....!
A HAND-SHAKE?
BINGO!
THE HIDE, TEETH, BONES, EVERY-THIN'!
PLEASE, LET ME HAVE 'EM!
DRY OUT THE LIVER AND I'LL BUY THAT OFF YA, TOO!
S-SURE, I'M ONLY REALLY INTERESTED IN THE MEAT...

THEN IT'S A DEAL!
O... KAY?
SWSH
SWSH
FWOOSH
!
THAT'S AN ADVANCE!
FOUR DAYS!
CAN YA WAIT FOR ME UNTIL THEN?
I'LL SELL IT IN TOWN, TAKE MY CUT...
AND COME SPRINTIN' BACK!
SLAM
Y-YEAH, SEE YOU...
IT TURNS OUT THE BOARS I'D BEEN EATING WITHOUT A CARE IN THE WORLD ARE ACTUALLY PRETTY VALUABLE, HUH...

Creak
Tatsuya~
So, tonight's dinner~
Oh, Sonia. Where have you been?
Just out on a walk~
My, a custo-mer?
Hello!
Crack
E-even...
The... queen?
Wobble
ARISA AAA!
?

...
SAY... HOW DID YOU EVEN CATCH THIS THING?
PUT UP NETS BETWEEN THE TREES!
LOTS AND LOTS OF NETS!
SHOO AWAY THE BIRD!
ONCE IT'S TRAPPED, BEAT IT TO DEATH!
THEY SEEM KINDA DUMB, BUT THEY REALLY KNOW HOW TO HUNT.

ANYWAY, TIME TO BUTCHER IT.
I CAN'T WAIT TO TRY AND TAKE THIS HUGE THING APART.
sh
lup
STRIP
Chop
Chop
IT'S KINDA LIKE DUCK MEAT...
THAT'S A WHOLE LOTTA FAT.
YO, MISTER! I'M BACK!
I'VE BROUGHT THE MONEY...

HUU HHH?!
HEY! THAT'S A HECKIN' DEATH HAWK!
DEATH HAWK?
IT'S AN S-RANK MONSTER!
THE MEAT, CLAWS, BEAK, THEY ALL FETCH INSANE PRICES!
OH, REALLY?
THE PALMTOP RABBITS DID THE HUNTING FOR ME, SO I WOULDN'T KNOW...
YOU'VE GOT SOME FREAKIN' CRAZY PETS...
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY?
THIS IS WHAT I GOT FOR THAT DEVIL BOAR THE OTHER DAY.

I ALREADY TOOK MY CUT, SO...
IT'S 600 GOLD PIECES.
Plop
SAY, HOW MUCH WILL 600 GOLD GET YOU?
HUH?! DON'T YA KNOW ANYTHIN' ABOUT THE WORLD?!
TOWN GUARDS START ON AROUND 20 GOLD PIECES A YEAR.
HUH... SO, ONE GOLD PIECE WOULD BE AROUND 10000 JAPANESE YEN.
WAIT...
I JUST GOT MEGA-RICH!
That's six million yen!

THE BOAR'S WORTH THAT MUCH?!
I'M OVER THE MOON WITH MY CUT, TOO! THANKS!
HM? STILL...
THIS POUCH IS REALLY TINY AND LIGHT.
OH...
THEY'RE ORICHALCUM PIECES.
EACH IS WORTH 100 GOLD, YOU'VE GOT SIX OF 'EM IN THERE.
WHOA... ORICHALCUM...
THIS IS A FANTASY WORLD, ALL RIGHT!

COME TO THINK OF IT, THAT'S 600 YEN WORTH FOR THE OFFERING BOX...
CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK
KACHING
ADD THAT TO THE YAKINIKU SAUCE I BOUGHT WITH THE ADVANCE...
THAT'S 700 YEN TOTAL.
...
WHY DON'T YOU STAY FOR DINNER?
YOU CAN SLEEP IN THE STORAGE ROOM IF YOU LIKE.
HUH? THAT'S NICE OF YA TO OFFER, BUT WHAT ARE YA MAKIN'?
A HA.
TONIGHT, WE'RE MAKING...
CLAP
FRIED CHICKEN.
DEEP-FRYING FLOUR
Canola oil

DEEP-FRIED DEATH HAWK
(WITH UNCOATED DEEP-FRIED CARROT)
Ingredients: Cooking oil
Deep-frying flour
Ooooh!

Nom
Nom
CARROTS! MEATY, MEATY CARROTS! ♪
IT'S AMAZING~
CARROTS! CARROTS!
Munch
Munch
IT TASTES WICKED!
FRIED DEATH HAWK'S THE BEST~
Clatter
WHAT A LOVELY SMELL~
WHAT'S THIS? IT LOOKS INCREDIBLE.
Clatter
Clatter
Clatter
Clatter
DEJA VU!
SECONDS!

HMM, ALL RIGHT...
LET'S SEE...
Munch
Badump
Badump
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
Nom
Nom
Nom
Nom
Nom
Nom
Wow...
Now that's flavor...
Fwah

MISTER! WHAT IS THIS?!
IT'S THE BEST THING I'VE EVER HAD!
THE NAME'S TATSUYA, NOT "MISTER".
CALL ME BY MY NAME.
MISTER TATSUYA... I THINK I'VE FIGURED OUT... WHY THE PALMTOP RABBITS LIKE YA SO MUCH...
THE CARROTS ARE OUT-STANDIN', AND SO IS YOUR COOKIN'...
I'M SURE TO THOSE RABBITS, THE "GLUTTONS OF THE APOCALYPSE", THIS PLACE IS LIKE HEAVEN ON EARTH.
THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE CALL YOU GUYS?

Sizzle
Sizzle
Hey, now...
Leave some for me, all right?
Sizzle
Bubble
Bubble
It's just too delicious~
Well, I'm glad you all like it, but still...
Tnk
Phew...
That should do it...
The fifth bowl.
I still haven't tried it myself... I wonder what death hawks actually taste like?
Let's see.
Crunch
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff

I-IT'S ...
AMA-ZING!
FWAH
THE MORE I BITE INTO THE FIRM, MEATY FLESH, THE MORE THE UMAMI-FILLED JUICES OF THE DEATH HAWK ESCAPE AND FLOW ALL OVER MY MOUTH!
Chomp
Munch
Munch
Munch
NOW I GET IT... THIS IS WHY ARISA JUST KEPT CHEWING THEM, OVER AND OVER...

I BURNED MY TONGUE, BUT I DON'T CARE!
MORE... I NEED MORE!
GRAB
Huff
Huff
Huff
MAN, THAT WAS GOOD...
Phew
STILL, I REALLY MISS RICE... ANOTHER MONTH OR TWO YET FOR THAT.
IN THE END, SIDE DISHES LIKE THESE JUST AREN'T THE SAME WITHOUT IT...

It was really nice! ♪
Squish
Mister Tatsuya... Could ya let me have dinner here every once in a while?
ALL IN ALL...
THE DEEP FRIED DEATH HAWK PARTY WAS A HIT.

FINALLY
...
GARLIC!
YOU'RE MINE!

SO...
TODAY, WE'RE HAVING GARLIC STEAK.
Sizzle
YAY! I CAN'T WAIT!
TNK
HUH?
IS THERE NO GARLIC IN MINE?
WELL, I'D BE IN TROUBLE IF YOU GOT ANY MORE ENERGETIC...
KNOCK KNOCK
HM?

COMING!
Creak
I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU SO LATE AT NIGHT...
BUT, IF IT ISN'T TOO MUCH TO ASK...
COULD YOU SPARE SOME FOOD?